

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming apparatus comprising:  
an image bearing member;

a plurality of developing devices for  
5 developing electrostatic images formed on said image  
bearing member with developers, said developing  
devices including respective developer carrying  
members for carrying respective developers;

moving means for moving a selected one of  
10 said developing devices to an operative position,  
wherein each of said developer carrying members is  
movable selectively to be in contact with or spaced  
from said image bearing member at the operative  
position;

15 wherein said apparatus is operable in a first  
image formation mode in which an image is formed using  
said plurality of developing devices and a second  
image formation mode in which an image is formed using  
one of said plurality of developing devices, and  
20 wherein said developer carrying member which is at the  
operative position in the first image formation mode  
is capable of being spaced from said image bearing  
member by a first distance during non-developing-  
operation, and said developer carrying member which is  
25 at the operative position in the second image  
formation mode is capable of being spaced from said  
image bearing member by a second distance during non-

developing-operation, and

wherein the second distance is smaller than the first distance.

5           2. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a duration in which said developer carrying member is spaced from said image bearing member by the second distance is shorter than the duration in which said developer carrying member is spaced from said image bearing member by the first distance.

10           3. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein when the image is formed in the first image formation mode, said developing devices are sequentially moved to the operative position.

15           4. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein when the image is formed in the second image formation mode, said one of the developing devices is not moved from the operative position.

20           5. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein each time one of said developing devices is moved to the operative position in the first image formation mode, said developer carrying member disposed at the operative position is spaced from said image bearing member.

6. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein said developer carrying member which is placed  
at the operative position is spaced from said image  
bearing member each time a non-image region between  
5 adjacent images which are continuously formed on said  
image bearing member passes by said developer carrying  
member.

7. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,  
10 wherein when a plurality of the images are  
continuously formed on said image bearing member in  
the second image formation mode, a distance by which  
said developer carrying member is spaced from said  
image bearing member corresponding to the non-image  
15 region is smaller than a distance by which said  
developer carrying member is spaced from said image  
bearing member corresponding to a non-image region  
before a first one of the continuous images.

20 8. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein the second distance is larger than a thickness  
of a layer of the developer carried on said developer  
carrying member.

25 9. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein the second distance is not less than 500 $\mu$ m.

an apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, ..

wherein when said developer carrying member is spaced from said image bearing member by the first distance, rotation of said developer carrying member can be stopped.

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11. An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein when said developer carrying member is spaced from said image bearing member by the second distance, said developer carrying member remains rotating.

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12. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein each of said developing devices includes a regulating member for regulating an amount of the developer carried on said developer carrying member, and a potential difference between said developer carrying member and said regulating member is larger when said developer carrying member is spaced from said image bearing member than when said developer carrying member is contacted to said image bearing member.

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13. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein said moving means includes a rotatable member supporting said developing devices, and rotatable member rotates to move the selected one of said developing devices to the operative position.

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14. An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein  
said developer carrying member is contacted to or  
spaced from said image bearing member at the operative  
position by changing a distance between said image  
5 bearing member and said rotatable member.

15. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein at least one of developing devices is  
detachably mountable relative to a main assembly of  
10 said image forming apparatus.

16. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein at least one of developing devices is  
detachably mountable relative to said rotatable  
15 member.

17. An apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein the image formed in the first image formation  
mode is a full-color image, and the image formed in  
20 the second image formation mode is a monochromatic  
image.

18. An image forming apparatus comprising:  
an image bearing member;  
25 a plurality of developing devices for  
developing electrostatic images formed on said image  
bearing member with developers, said developing

devices including respective developer carrying members for carrying respective developers;

moving means for moving a selected one of said developing devices to an operative position, wherein each of said developer carrying members is capable of selectively contacting the developer carried thereon to said image bearing member or spacing the developer carried on said developer carrying member from said image bearing member, at the operative position;

wherein said apparatus is operable in a first image formation mode in which an image is formed using said plurality of developing devices and a second image formation mode in which an image is formed using one of said plurality of developing devices, and wherein the developer carried on said developer carrying member which is at the operative position in the first image formation mode is capable of being spaced from said image bearing member by a first distance during non-developing- operation, and the developer carried on said developer carrying member which is at the operative position in the second image formation mode is capable of being spaced from said image bearing member by a second distance during non-developing-operation, and

wherein the second distance is smaller than the first distance.

19. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein a duration in which the developer carried on said developer carrying member is spaced from said image bearing member by the second distance is shorter than  
5 the duration in which the developer carried on said developer carrying member is spaced from said image bearing member by the first distance.

20. An apparatus according to Claim 18 or 19,  
10 wherein when the image is formed in the first image formation mode, said developing devices are sequentially moved to the operative position.

21. An apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein  
15 when an image is formed in the second image formation mode, said one of the developing devices is not moved from the operative position.

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